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*SOME THINGS WORTH WHILE IN THEOLOGY*¹

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I

The first step into clearness in the bewildering total of the subjects of theological science would seem to be an agreement concerning the true perspective of faith. In some way or other the world of religious thought needs to be ordered in different degrees of worth. Some scheme involving a gradation of rank, valid for the religious human being, should be imposed upon the objects of religious concern. Relativity is the law of our being,—not the relativity which excludes, but that which is contained in, the absolute, as the planet in infinite space; and a deep and sure grasp of this law would seem to be of the utmost moment in theology. The story is told that Francis W. Newman, the radical, made a journey from London to Birmingham to discuss the profounder issues of religious belief with his brother, John Henry Newman, the Catholic; and when the question arose as to the axiom from which debate should begin, the Catholic proposed to the radical as the surest principle of faith the infallibility of the Pope. This story has, if not literal, at least symbolic truth. It serves admirably as an illustration of Cardinal Newman's sense of the perplexity and contradiction of his time, and his fine irony. It is almost needless to add that, while men are thus at variance concerning the relative security and value of the different interests of Christian faith, discussion can be nothing but a discipline in confusion.

¹A lecture delivered at the close of the Twelfth Session of the Harvard Summer School of Theology, July 21, 1910.

Doubtless it would be worth while to know everything that exists, whether as fact or force or idea, if one had mind enough and time enough for the task. We figure that in the divine intellect all being and all phases of being find perfect reflection. We cannot, however, bring ourselves to believe that even for the divine intellect one thing is as important as another. It may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to make out the perspective of values in the vision of God, but it can hardly be doubted that for him there exists some perspective. Nothing is more impressive in the teaching of Jesus than his representation of the eternal perspective: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. . . . Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."—"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" According to this teaching, while all things are known to God, all things have not the same worth for God; for him there is substance and accident, essential and incidental, temporal and eternal.

As matter of fact, perspective rules the lives of men. The world is shaped for each man according to his dominant interest. The chief object in the human landscape with the barber is the hair of his fellow-men, with the bootblack it is the feet. The special scholar is a person with a special perspective of values; it may be Greek, classic, Hellenistic, ecclesiastic; it may be Hebrew or Aramaic or Syriac, or any one of a large number of antique tongues; it may be research in any one of a score of different lines; in each case the world is shaped into important and unimportant by the special interest. The elective system is grounded upon two necessities; first, upon the necessity for division of labor, and second upon the necessity for freedom in determining this division. The world of knowledge is too big for the individual scholar or scientist. Bacon's boast that he took all knowledge for his province was vain even in his day; it would be a sign of insanity in ours. Bacon did nothing for

his province in ethics, in political theory, in metaphysics, or in the philosophy of religion. He stands simply as a great prophet of the coming glory of natural science; as such he has a definite and limited outlook upon reality.

The mere fact of perspective does not help us much. Nor do we gain very much in clearness when we note that perspective is determined partly by capacity and partly by environment. The ideal physician has an outlook upon life that has arisen from native force and opportunity. Capacity and call, in a way, fix the perspective of mankind; and the capacities being many and the calls different, the perspective becomes a vast aggregate of contrasts. So far relativity would seem to reduce all value to mere like and dislike working through the call and the prohibition of society. It would appear to be impossible to escape this issue unless we are willing to go deeper and stand upon the universal capacity of man as a human being, and upon the universal call of duty. Below all special capacities is the universal humanity; below all the separate callings is the undivided summons to quit ourselves like men.

Religion generates this just perspective because religion finds it upon the universal capacity and the universal call. Religion lives in the heavenly vision and obedience thereto. In the courses of this obedience the perspective is purified and extended, as with this obedience the new perspective was introduced. When Paul said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," he there and then changed the perspective of his life; Jesus of Nazareth, who had been the object of his enmity, then became his Master. We hear further of this perspective in these words: "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ"; still again, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, all things have become new." Religion begins in the vision of the moral ideal as the image of God's will for man; the resolve to become the servant of the moral ideal puts one on a new earth and under a new heaven; it does this with all religious souls. It therefore opens up one general perspective; and the basis of this one general perspective is, as I have said, the universal capacity and call.

From the life of the soul in God there arises when unhindered the normal perspective of faith. The trouble is that this normal perspective in the ideas and beliefs of religious men is so often suppressed. Our attitude toward the Bible may serve as an example. The old theory of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures was an error in sound human perspective. It made of equal importance all parts of the Bible because all stood in an equal infallibility. The modern method of research is wanting in perspective. All parts of the Bible are equally questionable because all share in a common uncertainty. Besides, the truth of research has thrown into shadow the truth of religious intuition. The ensign of Scotland is a lion rampant on a field of blood. That ensign hardly tells the truth about the heroic, but peace-loving, people of Scotland. Modern discussion about the Bible presents the historical scholar rampant on a field of waste and ruin; and thus it has come to pass that the Bible as the witness to the Eternal has suffered that last woe of greatness, it has been taken for granted.

Since the Bible has its chief value as a witness to the Eternal, the approach to what is central in that witness, whether historical or human, should be in the vision of sound perspective. The approach should be like that to Zermatt along the valley of the Visp. There is tumult and wild beauty all along the way. When, however, one gets to Zermatt, still more when one ascends to the Riffel Alp or the Gorner Grat, a new and grander perspective has replaced the old, and in the centre of the vista towers the mighty obelisk of the Matterhorn. It is useless to cry that this is not all; it is all the traveller thinks worth while; at all events, it is better worth while than anything else.

There is a similar ascent in the Bible through historical research and through ideas of worth to that which is central and supreme. There is the rich humanity of Genesis, the stormy epic of the Exodus, the roll of great oratory in the Deuteronomy, the barbaric magnificence of Joshua and Judges, the sign of growing civilization in the records of the kingdom, the interior depth of the Psalms; there are the piety, speculative daring, and world-sympathy of Job, the moral theism and the moral humanism of the prophets. All along the advance the scenery is great. Still,

when one comes to the elevation from which the sublime figure of Jesus is visible, it is seen to be central, and to call at once for a new perspective of values.

So we judge concerning the very numerous beliefs of Christian people. The apostle tells us that all flesh is not the same flesh, that one star differs from another star in glory. All faith is not the same faith; there is a faith in the relatively unimportant and there is a faith in the central and supreme. The jumble of interests and values that one so often sees, as if all were of equal moment and worth, is a sign of the uneducated intellect and the unenlightened conscience. The men who contend for apostolical succession with as much zeal as they do for the permanence of the prophetic mind, who fight for ritual as uncompromisingly as for the morality of the Sermon on the Mount, who are as sure of the miracles of the Lord as they are of his love, who are unable to discern between beliefs about Jesus and the reality of his Person working through conceptions clearly inadequate, who refuse to judge between the temporal and the eternal, who believe in the coming of the Holy Ghost and yet leave little or nothing for him to do beyond giving his sanction to the arrested intellect of the church, who will not subordinate the ends of the ecclesiastic and the traditionalist to the ideals of the Christian thinker and man, are not "walking in the light," but in the night of which Hegel wrote, in which "all the cows are black."

II

Next to just perspective in the values of faith, I should place insight into the society of persons in our world and in our universe. For the Christian thinker the last word about the nature of our human world would appear to be that it is a society of persons; the final thought about the eternal world would seem to be that it too is a society of persons or spirits. The ultimate wisdom concerning the universe is that its substance is in souls. All else is accident, mode, temporal form; the truth of our universe lies in what I have elsewhere called a republic of souls.

If we look into the gospels, we shall find this statement confirmed in every part and in its full intention and scope. In the

message of Jesus the first emphasis is on God the eternal soul: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done as in heaven so in earth." "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This emphasis is final and sovereign in the teaching of Jesus. God the Father of men is the indispensable background of his life; without the soul of the Eternal the soul of Jesus would be an enigma, and his career meaningless and vain. When we cease to put the sovereign emphasis where Jesus put that emphasis, however orthodox we may appear to be, we part company with him.

At this point the Unitarian and the Trinitarian traditions naturally correct and strengthen each other. Frederic Denison Maurice learned from his inheritance of faith that this emphasis upon the fatherhood of God was the strength of the old Unitarianism; he learned from the rich and sober Trinitarianism into which his inherited faith grew that the revealing, mediatorial, reconciling soul of Jesus Christ became the supreme single assurance of the fatherhood of God. When Unitarianism and Trinitarianism are reduced to two great lines of testimony to the reality of souls, we see new possibilities of service in them, each to the other; how Unitarianism may plead for the aboriginal soul, and how Trinitarianism, as one of its merits, may renew the vision of God in the vision of Jesus Christ.

The second line of emphasis in the gospels, and in the entire New Testament, is upon the soul of the Lord. He is at the heart of his religion. The significance of his soul is bound up on the one side with the character of God, and on the other with the moral being and value of Man. The immediate interest of the New Testament is as an introduction to the soul of Jesus Christ, as its ultimate interest is as an introduction to God the Father. It is a symbol of the soul of the Lord, a reflection thereof, a way of approach to him, an elevation from which he may be seen. Questions of criticism, textual or historical, the apparatus of the scholar and his entire achievement, are means to this end. If we are serious, and if we know what we are about, we seek through the purified and authentic record the vision of the soul of the Master.

The third line of emphasis in the message of Jesus is on the souls of men. For Jesus these are the only ultimate realities: the soul of the Eternal Father, the soul of his Son and Prophet Christ, and the souls of men. These souls constitute the substance of all worlds, visible and invisible, so far as we are able to judge. All outside moral personality is accident, mode, temporal form, the mere field or camping-ground for the discipline of soul. For obvious reasons the idealistic philosophy of the world must always appear to be the friend of Christianity. It divides the world and the universe into two parts; it reduces them to the abiding and the fleeting; it describes the abiding as persons or under some aspect of personality; it holds as fleeting all things that fall below moral being. The universe comes before the sense as material reality, beautiful to the eye, full of melody to the ear, substantial to touch, and at the farthest remove from soul, older than soul, underlying it, determining its fate. This same universe comes before reason in its analytic and constructive might, and at once its beauty and melody are seen to be forms of man's experience; its substance dissolves into force, force becomes spirit, and that which at first appeared to be the final antithesis of soul is now apprehended as the singular and impressive appeal to the soul of man from the soul of God. This is the idealistic analysis which no enemy can long resist. When moral personality is accentuated through a vast and precious experience, with all its misgivings, it knows itself as the worthiest and the most enduring force in our world; thence it moves to a confident and compassionate view of all souls; thence to the sublime Master and Bishop of souls, and through him to the moral being of God, to the soul of our Father in heaven.

From this position the entire world of sense and time becomes the sacrament of soul. Berkeley is right about the world as it lives in the senses; it is the incessant and ordered speech of the Infinite Spirit to the spirit in man. Trade, art, science, government, philosophy, religion, and all records of religion are but sacraments of the soul of man with the soul of his brother, or between the soul of man and the soul of God. Everywhere soul is the reality and the end; everything else—church, creed,

Bible—is means, the precious but passing servant of the sovereign and everlasting soul. Death awaits everything but soul; in the transformations of being nothing is perdurable but soul. Soul and its works are the heart of all we know, and the relation between these two parts of the spiritual life of the world is defined with unsurpassable clearness and pathos in these ancient words of faith:—

“Of old didst thou lay the foundations of the earth;
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shall perish, but thou shalt endure;
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall have no end.”

Such is the soul of God; according to Christian faith, such is the soul of the Lord and such the soul of man.

III

Originality in theological thought is another of the things that are worth while, and never since the apostolic age has there been an opportunity for originality in the sane meaning of the word such as exists today. By originality I do not mean mere individuality or brilliance or charm of mind. There is a type of mind to which the word originality is applied because of its mode of operation, and not because of its achievement. Such a mind scintillates with wit and humor; it moves by sudden turns and surprises; it deals in hints and suggestions that are novel; its chief value is in its strange, brilliant movement and not in its goal. Again, such a mind is artistic, original in device, but not in the substance of its thought, not in insight or command over its subject. This subjective originality is immensely interesting and in its way valuable, but it does not concern us here. The originality that seems to be priceless is objective; it advances upon its subject in a great invasion, illuminates reality like the sun, and while it is itself hard to look at, makes the world that lives in its light visible and beautiful.

This objective originality is of several grades and is adjusted to the differing capacities of serious minds. It means first of

all the new, either absolutely or relatively; in the second place, it signifies greater depth in the apprehension of the old and the putting of the old thus apprehended in new relations; finally, it stands for immediate contact with reality.

That there should be absolutely new insights in the sphere of religion has from time immemorial been regarded as something akin to madness or blasphemy. Such originality, it is generally believed, is possible only to ignorance. Only those who know little of what the great world has thought can live in the vain hope of this achievement. The Christian church has accepted the ancient insight as exhaustive and final, notwithstanding its belief in the infinitude of the sphere of the soul and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Even the relatively new has been expected only from minds of the rarest distinction, and this relatively new has been considered infinitesimal in amount and incidental in importance. The antinomies of the old categories of theology have vexed the intellect into dissatisfaction; they have paralyzed it with despair of anything new and better. Under this load of humility, enough to sink a navy, it is not strange that so few new insights have freshened and enriched the weary way of theological science. It is a misfortune to acquiesce in the feeling that hereafter the sole possibility of originality, in the sense of the relatively new, lies in the sphere of natural science; it is likewise a mistake.

Today we are the witness of at least one example of this kind of originality, in the universal emergence of a new category of theological thought. This new category may be expressed in the term *humanism*. This term has been sadly abused in the philosophical world; it has been used now in a profound way and again in a shallow; it has advanced by evil report and good report; and whether they that are for it or they that are against it are the greater in number is not clear. Yet the word covers what is incontestably the profoundest insight of our time, and in a genuine and wholesome sense this insight is new.

Notwithstanding what old Xenophanes said of the crude anthropomorphism of his day, and his fine scorn thereof expressed in his famous words that "if cattle or lions had hands, so as to paint with their hands and produce works of art as men do, they

would paint their gods and give them bodies in form like their own, horses like horses, cattle like cattle," his remark is chiefly valuable as showing that he understood little of his essential nature as man, and little of the one Supreme Being whose existence he confessed. The same want of fundamental clearness and grasp confuses the theistic argument both in attack and defence through almost the entire history of thought. It is open to serious question whether Plato knew that his Idea of the Good was a form of humanism, whether Aristotle perceived that his Eternal thinker was an Eternal man. It is hardly open to question that Hume and Mill, in their negative process, failed of fundamental clearness here. Indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that for the first time in history men are now beginning to see clearly that theism is humanism applied to the interpretation of the universe; that humanism means the apprehension of the Infinite through man as the highest we know; that man comes to his best in Jesus Christ, and therefore, that Christianity is the sovereign form of humanism. That there is risk in this interpretation is clear; it is, however, the risk of a great faith, and is therefore worth while. Besides, it is well to see that belief in God and its opposite mean the victory and the defeat of man. Further, we must make this choice of the Eternal humanity, or an inferior choice, with less reason for its truth, or we must stand dumb and helpless in the presence of the Infinite. It is not true to say that the human interpretation of the Infinite is all we can do: we can do nothing; we can substitute for the human the sub-human or brutal. It is true that the human interpretation of God is the best we can do, and that while it involves the venture of faith, it is infinitely worth while.

Turning now for a moment to the fruitfulness of this new insight, we see at once that if God and man are essentially akin, the humanity of God is that in him which chiefly concerns our race. The emphasis is upon his character, and the approach to the mystery of his being is best made through his character. Love is the great illumination in the metaphysic of faith. Again, if the divine and the human are in essence identical, the old devices that were invented to save the dignity of Jesus Christ are outgrown. To call Jesus the ideal or perfect man is to give

him the highest possible praise; it is the same kind of praise that we give to God when we address him as the Eternal humanity, or when we say, "Our Father who art in heaven." The kinship and continuity of souls in all worlds is an insight working widely today in free minds in the Christian church and beyond it; it is an insight slowly bringing about something like a revolution in the three great departments of Christian philosophy,—in theology, in Christology, and in anthropology; it is a single instance awakening the religious mind of the time to the possibility of other new insights of a fundamental nature. The time is ripe for the discovery of a relatively new order of categories as the intellectual expression of the religious and Christian heart.

If originality in the sense of the new or the relatively new is a possibility open to question, originality as meaning greater depth of apprehension is not exposed to the same degree of doubt. This kind of originality is sorely needed, and it is open to a much larger number of minds. The old concepts must be made to bear profounder meanings; as matter of fact, in the lives of religious depth these categories carry vaster and more precious burdens. In this generation the idea of God means something immeasurably more just and humane than it meant even two generations ago. The relation of the idea of God to the world of human beings, contemporary, historic, and racial, has brought this idea to a content of moral meaning inexpressibly richer and grander. Here comes into full view one great aspect of the originality of Jesus. Compare for a moment the idea of God entertained by the loftiest of the prophets of Israel and the idea of the God and Father of Jesus. The idea is inexpressibly more inward and spiritual, it is set in vastly deeper and more vital relations, and it carries a burden of moral tenderness and humanity immeasurably greater. Jesus takes the old ideas of God, the love of God and the love of man, the kingdom of God, and transforms them by the greater depth of his thought and the nobler content of meaning which he makes them bear. The silver currency has become gold, and the gold represents the empire of absolute goodness. So the ideas of law and sin, ethical ideal and capacity, under the profounder insight of Jesus, become something new. For the precious ideas in the faith of

his people the mind of Jesus was the refiner's fire; what went in and what came out were the same only in name. This note of originality in the teaching of Jesus seldom receives the emphasis that it should receive. The question is not whether Plato and Aristotle were monotheists, whether the Hebrew prophets were the originators of moral monotheism, whether there have not been numberless persons of high distinction who held with Jesus the Fatherhood of God. The question is, what content of meaning did the concept carry? The contention is that here, over all competing systems, there is immeasurably greater purity and depth, and therefore originality, in the teaching of Jesus.

The example of the Master should stimulate the disciple. Many ideas of great worth are inlaid in the soil of superstition. The ideas of revelation, inspiration, regeneration, atonement, especially the ideas of the supernatural, need the refiner's fire. There are elements in them of the utmost preciousness; and yet, because of the mass of ignorance and absurdity in which they are imprisoned, they are in danger of being flung, by impatient thinkers, to the dust-heap. The ideas of faith over its entire circle call for greater depth and purity of apprehension. Learning is good but learning alone will not do; penetration is needed, the love of ideas that leads the mind to ponder them till the day break and the shadows flee away.

The widest opportunity for originality is in the immediate contact with spiritual reality. Here we touch the peculiar distinction and genius of Christianity. The disciples of Jesus Christ have free access to God; they are kings and priests to God. Mediatorial systems and all devices that put the soul and the Eternal apart are foreign to the Gospel. One of the greatest of the New Testament writings has for its object the presentation of this universal privilege of Christian men; they have the right to personal approach and immediate fellowship with God. This, too, is the deepest meaning of our Protestantism. The right of private judgment is contained in the deeper right of immediate access to God. This profoundest privilege of the disciple of Jesus provides for a religion that shall be a religion in immediacy, a religion greatedened by the sense of history yet resting in the present vision of eternal realities.

We have seen that the structure of our human world is personal, that the constitution of our universe is personal; both the personal world and the personal universe are in action and inter-action. This action and inter-action are going on under our eyes; they mean throwing into the field of vision the phenomena in which souls in time and the supreme eternal soul are revealed. The social world and the social universe are volcanic; the fire and flame are pouring forth under our observation. We are free not from ancient aid, but from ancient domination; we welcome the light of all the ages while we refuse to wear their colored spectacles; we cherish tradition, but decline to employ it as a measuring-rod of truth; we behold God face to face working in this tremendous world of man, flaming forth his justice and pity and calling upon us to lay to heart the vision.

At length we stand in theology where science has stood for centuries, holding the past as an aid to immediate vision, declining to substitute antique opinion for present insight. The pure in heart shall see God. If the pure soul may see God the Supreme soul, surely he may see all other souls in relation one to another and to God; may see this world of souls instinct with God in action, and thus come to know through immediate beholding the greater things of the religion of the Lord.

Second-hand religion is doomed; it turns the Christian church into a pawn-shop and encourages men to trade in things of the spirit. Second-hand religion at best is but preserved fruit, tolerable only between seasons and in the winter of our discontent. The call is for the primary dealing with the spiritual world and a mind rich in the impressions and images that come from immediate contact with God.

One form of immediate contact with God has always been held by the faithful. Prayer lives in immediacy; perhaps the most significant thing in prayer as used by the faithful in all ages and among all races is this fact of immediacy. It is an impressive exercise to assemble in imagination the world as it kneels or stands in its moments of prayer, and to reflect upon the fact that the world in its prayer is in immediate fellowship with God.

The exercise of mind involved in prayer when it ceases to be vain repetition is remarkable. No great soul has ever been

content to address God wholly in the thoughts and words of another. Liturgy has its uses; but liturgy as an exclusive prescription is an impertinence to the soul that would speak to God its own life in all its fulness of sorrow and hope; it is a serious embarrassment to the soul that would, in a congregation of souls, discern their need and present that need in the simplicity and energy of personal vision to God. Liturgy is to be feared, however, chiefly because it encourages the dismissal of immediacy in religion. Prayer does not begin till it becomes a dialogue of the soul with God, a dialogue in the depths of sin and distress or on the heights of victory and peace. Prayer, like speech, has its style; and while words and phrases are adopted from the litanies of the race, they are wrought into new individuality and become the servants of the master who employs them, living in the distinction of his manner. Substitutes here carry with them the shadow of death; to be driven by the difficulty of prayer to the refuge of liturgy, is to be driven to defeat along one line of supreme privilege and hope. The day that a Congregational minister confesses his dependence upon liturgy he acknowledges himself beaten where victory is worth more than at any other point of the field, and he goes forth like Samson shorn of his locks, who wist not that his strength was departed.

I suppose that no great soul has ever used liturgy other than as an aid. It has been set at nought in the central personal wrestle of the spirit with God. It is this fact that saves prayer to the witness of immediacy. Here we see that the dialogue of the pious and rapt soul with God is one of the things that have kept the church close to eternal reality. So long as men pray and want to pray, so long as they carry hearts burdened with great meanings to God, and speak them to him in the simplicities and nobilities of speech coined under the constraint of profound feeling, there will be one section of human life, at least, in immediate communion with God.

Prayer is, however, an example of the law of immediacy that should extend over the entire range of religious experience. All the interests of religion should be seen by those who deal in them. Upon coming from his study to the room where his family were

gathered, Bushnell, with his face shining, replied to the question, "What have you seen?" "I have seen the Gospel." He had looked for it, toiled through worlds of *débris* to get to it; finally, he arrived; there it stood in its aboriginal splendor and he beheld it. It is pathetic to reflect that on the whole Bushnell's experience is singular. It should be universal; for it exhibits the call and privilege of every Christian man. The hope that in Bushnell seemed audacious should seem so no longer. The *débris* grows less and less. No world of authority today throws the sun of righteousness into eclipse. When Carlyle began his effort to recover Cromwell to the vision of mankind, it seemed to him hopeless. He set forth his despair in words of rare pathos and beauty even for him. The hunt was for the god Balder; it was long, hard, desperate; at length the pursuing soul came to the innermost recesses of the underworld where Balder was imprisoned, beheld him as he was, saw the veritable Balder, but could not bring him back. As with the lost Balder so it has been with the Gospel of Christ. It has sunk under world-encumbrances, and great spirits have in the past despaired of even seeing it, much less of bringing it back. But the day of the Lord is here; and because it is here, his disciples may see him and his kingdom and restore them to the immediate vision of the faithful.

IV

It is worth while to try to get at the interior meaning of traditional theological ideas. Those who have won their freedom should be without impatience, certainly without unfairness, in dealing with the dominating ideas of the past. Freemen should be the first to see the elements of present availability in ancient beliefs, the swiftest to recognize under antique forms of thought the evolving spirit of truth. Failure here is disgrace, as we see in a mind like Bacon. The reader of Bacon who knows Plato and Aristotle is ashamed of the Englishman's depreciation of the Greek thinkers, whose grasp of human truth is immeasurably greater than his; indeed, he figures as an extempore genius in comparison with their mature and monumental achievement.

Bacon would have done far better for his new truth had he set it in the presence of the old with sympathy and honor.

The theological achievement of Christian history needs revaluation; in this revaluation there is surely much to enrich the thinker today. The sense of history has indeed been too often a paralyzing influence; freedom has too frequently been gained by an abrupt break with the past, and maintained in fierce antagonism to it. This is abnormal. The sense of history should be the recognition of the working and expression of the spirit of truth in men; the work and the expression must go on; but continuity among thinkers should be preserved by the present greatening the past. Essential ideas need not lose their historic associations when lifted into new range and character. Progressive minds have greatly erred here; they have seldom seen the law of the kingdom of truth,—first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; seldom have they kept the memory of the spring morning in the rich and glowing beauty of autumn. Background is thus apt to be absent from the work of the pioneer; the vast world of man is reduced to a single aspect; the vitalization of ideas that comes from their association with the greatest minds in immemorial reaches of time is too lightly regarded; the prophet is not lifted as he should be by the consciousness that the whole ideal majesty of the past seeks new and higher utterance in him. Our creative work in theology is crude on this account; it is mean through narrow sympathies; and our spirituality lacks the body and flavor which the consciousness of history alone can impart.

For these reasons I deplore the easy disregard, so common today, of the great imperfect ideas of historic theology. The mention of the Trinity today, among progressive minds of every name, is apt to produce a smile; to say a word in its behalf is apt to be regarded as at best a pardonable lapse into sentiment. This attitude I am bold enough to call unworthy and even shallow. Great minds contended with one another in a battle royal for the attainment of the best insight into the being of God. You may dislike their name for what they found; are you sure that you can live without the reality on which their vision rested? When a thinker like Professor Royce comes to the conclusion,

in his great essay supplementary to that on the Conception of God, that distinctions of vital moment to man are eternal in the Godhead, students of theology should pause and reflect.

I confess that the vision of the Deity with an ineffable society in himself, complete and perfect in himself before all worlds, the ground and hope of our social humanity when in the fullness of time it was brought forth, a social Deity, expressing himself in the evangelical terms that denote the generic phases of our human world,—the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,—is to me, both for the intellect and the heart, of quite inexpressible moment. Here I find the eternal archetype of the social world of man; here I discover its eternal basis and the hope of its perfect realization. It is worth while to try to get inside the hard, arithmetical dialectical movement of thought, and thus gain something of the richness and grandeur of this ancient theistic insight.

In the Nicene creed and the ideas that lie behind it, one finds the great conception of man constituted as spirit in the image of the Eternal Son. The deeper Unitarian thinkers have always seen how much greater the Athanasian doctrine is than the Arian. The doctrine of man depends upon the doctrine of Christ; if Christ is only similar to God, then man is only similar. If Christ is consubstantial with the Father, so are all his children in time. I am unable to see why men who think resolutely should hesitate to affirm the deity of Jesus Christ. If there is no deity in Jesus Christ, he is not the son of God; if there is no deity in man, he is not the child of God. What we need today is faith in a race consubstantial with God, issuing in the sincere confession of the deity of Jesus Christ and the deity of man. The special incarnation of God in Jesus has been held and fought for by the historic church; the incarnation of God in man as man has been revived from early Christian thought by the Unitarian leaders; we should see that these beliefs are not contradictory. The belief about Jesus implies the belief about man. We are not called upon to dethrone the Lord; the summons is to lift the race whose prophet he is. When we repeat the Lord's Prayer, if we know what we are doing, we confess the consubstantiality of our being with the being of God. When we fall

from this doctrine of the essential identity in difference of God and man, we fall into a sea of images. God is our Father and we are his children only in parable; the family relation is only an image, dear to feeling, of something transcendental and inscrutable. Our human world forms images of God according to its own best relations, and it employs these as symbols of its worth to the Eternal; the truth being that the Eternal is essentially unlike us men and in his essence absolutely inaccessible to men. This is the nemesis that waits upon an inferior doctrine of man; and he alone moves on a level to which this nemesis cannot rise who has entered the ancient conception of the consubstantiality of man with God.

When we come to our New England theology it is fair to say that its humanity is undivine and its Divinity inhuman. That, however, is not the whole truth. Its ideas of sovereignty, sin, regeneration, reconciliation, and life in the spirit, are essentially imperishable conceptions of faith. The sovereignty of the universe belongs to something; our great predecessors reasoned that it belonged to God. The tragedy of the world of man is before us; it is a wild and terrible issue of inherited tendency and individual initiative, of mistake and perversity; it lies heavy upon the soul of the idealist today, and no doctrine of man can long detain serious persons that refuses to take this tremendous aspect of human society into account. The old idea of the exceeding sinfulness of man is but the dark obverse of blazing idealism with which our fathers judged the world. With a conscience in heaven man discovered himself and his world in hell. There is a moral depth in the old anthropology that atones for much of its theoretic crudeness. There is probably no tradition in the church so utterly worthless from a formal point of view as the doctrine of the atonement. Intellectually, it is confusion worse confounded; yet the human need that works through this tradition of reconciliation to the highest ideal within the soul and to the Holiest in the universe and rests there forevermore, is a revelation of the utmost depth in man and the utmost moral height in God. It is one thing to see the dust-heap of tradition and another to discover there the gold and the precious stones.

It is no valid objection to say that we do not construe the doctrine of God or of man as these were construed by men of old. Our object as thinkers is truth; and in the search for truth we do not resolve ideas into the times of their immaturity and keep them in this bondage, but following the supreme example we wink at these ideas so conceived and expressed. Our purpose is to conserve the intellectual treasure of faith and turn it to new and more fruitful issues. The history of Christian theology may be written in a manner that makes it look as the Roman Forum or the Coliseum looks today. It may be conceived as the achievement of an outgrown age and presented as a great and tragic ruin. Surely there is another and a better way of conceiving and representing these imperishable ideal forces. It is possible to enter the mind of these antique architects of thought, everywhere revise and greaten the plan; it is possible to do something toward the presentation of the finished design. Such an attempt is at least worth while: it issues in the sense of the great unbroken succession of prophets and thinkers; it preserves the precious sense of the continuity of faith; it enables the profoundest and the most unsparing criticism to go hand in hand with generous constructive purpose; it blends in one the passion for truth and the passion for humanity.

V

The way of salvation is another thing worth while. The actual condition and the ideal condition of human beings and the way from the one to the other are worthy of profound consideration. For most men life is a sordid and miserable labyrinth; to picture the freedom that exists beyond this labyrinth is not enough; the chief need is to find the way out. Jesus came to seek and to save men lost to the true uses, satisfactions, and hopes of existence; and his religion still offers itself as the way of rescue and return. Human beings are caught in a tremendous tragedy in which death seems to be the only way out. Perversity is one fountain of the moral evil or sin of the soul; men distinctly refuse light and prefer Barabbas to Jesus. Ignorance is another fountain of wrongdoing; there is a gigantic mistake

firing the pulse of wickedness; "if thou hadst known the things which belong to thy peace!" The evil condition is confirmed through weakness; the animal in man is strong, the spirit is faint. Thus moral evil tends more and more to take on the character of a malady; the world is sick and needs the physician of the soul.

Here is the material which was shaped by men of old into doctrines of original sin, depravity, and atonement. These were forms of diagnosis; we set them aside because they do not explain the case or call for the best treatment. The old material, the complex misery of man, is still here; our understanding of it must be less morbid, less the work of imagination, less at the mercy of strange riotous emotions, simpler, healthier, and more in accord with the fundamental notion that we are living in a redemptive universe. Still, the woful condition must be acknowledged; men who pattern existence after the beast of the field are ill at ease. Those who try to live on bread alone are attempting the impossible, and their sorrow is great. The world was made to run on the two rails of flesh and mind, energized from a third rail alive with God, and this world is engaged in the reduction of existence to an impossible simplicity. When the heart has a thousand tongues, it is vain to declare that it has but one.

There is crime in the world, and law undertakes to deal with that; there is vice in society, and public opinion measures itself against that; there is the selfishness sanctified by custom that works through the established order of human life, often ruthless as death, and the moral reformer attacks that; there is the hidden, pitiable plight of the soul in its perversity, ignorance, and malady, and the prophet of the Christian gospel addresses himself primarily to that. The seat of our difficulty and our woe is here. In this labyrinth we are caught, and religion is nothing unless it shall provide a way of escape.

The appeal of the gospel at this point is great. It does not limit its attention to the moral patrician; it does not select the fairest portion of society and pitch its tent there; it does not come to call the righteous, who are often merely the self-righteous, but sinners. It sees and understands the tragedy in which the

vast majority of human beings live and suffer; it has insight, wide and profound, and boundless sympathy. It thus wins its way, gains a hearing, and sets up the moral ideal in the depraved life in an atmosphere of Divine pity and Eternal consolation; it is thus able to begin a new creation in the animal life of men, to found and build the kingdom of God; it thus becomes a redemptive religion, a way of salvation, and Jesus is known as Redeemer and Saviour.

Here we see the strength of the evangelical tradition. Its analyses are poor, its formal beliefs inadequate, its philosophies of the life of the soul crude; but all these defects are as nothing when set beside its sense of the sin and woe of the world, its great sympathies, and its message of the compassion of God in Jesus Christ. On account of its primal consciousness of the moral tragedy of human life, its experimental knowledge of deliverance through the pity of God mediated by Jesus Christ, its abiding sympathy, and its glorious service, the Christianity of the evangelical survives and is bound to survive.

The purified philosophy of the Christian religion must absorb this precious element in the evangelical tradition. To take over all that goes with that tradition is impossible; can two walk together unless they are agreed? The origin of our human tragedy as in the Adam and Eve story; the universality and necessity of human depravity as the inescapable devil's birth-right of every child that comes into the world; the cross of Christ as the symbol of the expiation of God's wrath or as a debt paid on our behalf, or as a substitution for our suffering demanded by the majesty of offended law; the limitation of moral opportunity to this life; the reduction of the vocation of Jesus to the salvation of the elect; the claim that God is not on the side of every soul that he has made, are not essential to the spirit of the evangelical tradition; rather they are the impedimenta to be abandoned in the decisive battle that is now upon us.

As thought about God is freed from fear it must at once ascend in love. Here is our difficulty, the difficulty, too, of the nobler tradition of the intellect in all generations. As the intellect has been freed from fear it has not always ascended in love; it has abandoned the lower and its peculiar power, while it has failed

to find the higher and its mightier motive. An evil spirit has too often haunted the work of the free intellect. This spirit has made the intellect careless of the religion of children and youth, unmindful of the religious needs of pagans at home and abroad, and callous in presence of the moral and spiritual condition of society. Religion has become a programme for the patrician; it has lost its democratic breadth and vitality; it has sunk into an affair of concepts. Better concepts are a gain surely over poorer; but what are better concepts with no enthusiasm for humanity in comparison with crude concepts fired with passionate concern for human souls.

The reasonable faith of the future must take up into itself the prevailing forces in historic Christianity. It must shape its ideas in the presence of human need, conserve the spirit that makes the wilderness and the solitary place rejoice, concern itself with the highways to Zion, remember those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; it must be the prophet of a redemptive universe and present the Christian religion as the way of salvation; it must not surrender to a crude and discredited scheme of thought the great names of Redeemer and Saviour as applied to Jesus; it must reclaim them and fill them with a purer and mightier content.

VI

There is still another interest which, it seems to me, is of the gravest concern for religious men of all types of opinion—the demonstration of the spirit. Is there a spirit in man? Is there a Spirit in the universe? Is it possible for the spirit in man and the Spirit in the universe to meet now, and may we look for the demonstration of the Holy Spirit?

This brings us face to face with that which is absolutely essential to Christian faith. The reality of the Christian religion depends upon the truth of those three propositions: there is a spirit in man; there is a Spirit in the universe; these meet in the victorious moral experience. The denial of spirit is the denial of God, the denial of the moral being of man and the denial of the truth of the teaching of Jesus. If these three

propositions are untrue, our faith is vain; if they are incapable of attestation, we are left in hopeless confusion; if they are true, and if they are open to verification, all other interests of faith become subordinate and even incidental.

Here we see at once how impossible it is to limit the process of faith to the intellect. The proof that we seek, the evidence that we demand, the demonstration that we crave, must be in and through the courses of life. Spirit is not adequately defined as immaterial force, nor as bare, unqualified consciousness, nor as personality pure and simple. Spirit is moral personality, conscious being in the character and power of love. If it is true that God is love, it is true that God is spirit. If it is true that man may become a lover and servant of the heavenly vision, it is true that man has the capacity of perfect spirit. If it is true that the Eternal lover and the human may meet in time and live, the Divine love in the human, it is true that man may have fellowship with God. These propositions are, however, hypothetical, and no more, while they remain in the sphere of the intellect; only through moral being in action can they be authenticated as true.

Christian experience is the great defence of the faith. All other defences run back into this; the citadel of faith is in the possibility of moral victory amid the waste and shame of the world. In this demonstration of spirit the first note is in the joint action of the personal soul with the Infinite soul. Then follows the social endeavor always in joint action with God, in the attack upon the brutalities of trade, the inhumanities of wealth and power, the mean acquiescence of men in their weakness and sordidness, the infamy of race hatreds, the fatal force of class distinctions when viewed in any other light than as providing distinct and greater service to the whole; the injustice of government, the merely provisional character of much in law, the warfare of man upon man, the colossal denial in action of human brotherhood. The joint action of the spirit in man and the Spirit in the universe over the whole breadth of humanity is the sole and only way to articulate the demonstration of the ultimate realities of faith.

It is reported that Daniel Webster during his last days said,

in answer to some words about the hereafter, "The fact is what I want." What we need in the deepest things of the soul is reality. Subtle reasoning may be a clever concealment of ignorance, skill in dialectics may be merely the trick of the intellectual juggler, even a sober and weighty order of concepts may come to appear an imagination, insubstantial as a dream. Substance, reality, fact, is the great demand of the vexed soul; and in vain do we try to meet this demand beyond the tides of life itself.

If we look into the Old Testament, we see at once that its strength is here. Reality is an issue through the intellect from the moral being of man. Everywhere reality is attained and articulated through action. The Old Testament presents a moral world in action; and through this world in action the eternal reality is delivered. Speculation apart from the suffering and achieving spirit is foreign to the genius of the Old Testament. It is equally foreign to the genius of the New Testament. The greatest thing in the gospels is the authentication which the teaching of Jesus receives in his life. He returned from his temptation in the power of the Spirit; his whole career was in the demonstration of the Spirit. His method of authentication is set forth in the words: "He that doeth the will of God shall know the doctrine." Thus Arnold's plea for conduct as three-fourths of life, Robertson's contention in behalf of knowledge through obedience, and Fichte's great insight that the test of reality is not in feeling nor in thought, but in action, are set forth with incomparable clearness and completeness in the way of the Lord.

If our homage to intellect is to be a reasonable homage, the limits of pure intellect must be clearly seen. No man can by mere searching find God. Reality is not originated by thought, and in the realm of the soul it is not discovered by pure thought. Here the will is king and the intellect servant. Men wait today as never before for the new and deeper thought; but they wait for something more. The best thought leaves us at the outer gate of Paradise; it leaves this Paradise in the region of possibility. Aristotle's two great words are *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*, possibility and actuality, and they are of moment here. Pure

thought gives possibility and no more; to give actuality, the will must work with the intellect. Hence the universal appreciation of the great moral personality; such a personality is a world-revealer, a world-authenticator. The society of moral persons interpreted through moral genius is therefore the ultimate source of revelation, because it is the final authentication of the ideas of faith. Christian society inhabited by the heavenly vision, thoroughly aroused, in action, and going as the sea goes when the tempest has been upon it for many days, or as the planet goes in perpetual exemplification of the great law of gravity, would know itself and its universe as spirit, and it would declare in the irresistible logic of the creative life the reality and the coming of the kingdom of love.

Our wisest thinkers have always seen that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the deepest in our Christian faith. Here is the hope of the hardened impenitent, the demoralized penitent, the soul in its ignorance and perversity, in its blazing idealism and its mean and black actuality. Here is the ground of our confidence in the growing revelation of God to mankind, in the unbroken succession of the prophets and their availing service in the continuous upward movement of the thought and character of the race. That nothing essential may be lost, that everything prophetic may be brought to perfect realization, that error may be eliminated, that evil may be overcome and done away, converted into eternal warning, and used as material to deepen the moral consciousness of man, that the great past may find expression in the greater present, and that the greater present may come at length to the consummation of the future, we rely upon the Holy Spirit. But this reliance must not be through mere or pure thought; it must be through action, joint action, till our world heaves and sighs with the indwelling energy of God, consciously invoked and let in through the consent and authentic cry of the soul.

Apart from this world of triumph and moral energy, all great symbols of the Christian faith, all theologies and philosophies of religion, the poetry of the church, and even the Bible itself with its attestation of a moral humanity in communion with a moral Deity, become as dead leaves in the whirl of the autumn

wind. A contemporary world devoid of God in the rhythm and fire of its action, leaves the historic world of faith pale and ineffectual. In religion the sovereign word is now. Man and the universe are today before the judgment seat, and nothing in the way of defence will finally avail but the present attestation of spirit.

The principle of unity in this series of things that have been said to be worth while is the living soul of man in fellowship with other souls and with God. From this aboriginal order we gain our vision of a world of spirit, a universe of Spirit; to this primal order of persons we come for original insight; this authentic order it is that sanctifies the antique in all its nobler phases; for man as soul we seek the way of salvation; and through this ultimate reality we crave the demonstration of the Spirit. The rational approximates the real as its image, but the rational is not the real; being and thought are two and not one,—twins of the Siamese order they may be, yet each has a distinct existence. The world is constituted in God; our humanity is constituted in God; it is the task of thought to discover this divine constitution of man and his world. The discovery is an intellectual satisfaction, and it is more; it is a condition of vital enlargement. For in the case of beings constituted in moral freedom, growth is not inevitable, it waits upon self-discovery. The great words in the Parable of the Lost Son are these: "When he came to himself." From the first he had been made according to a noble plan; the operation of this plan was not inevitable; it was helpless save in the way of protest and nemesis till self-knowledge arrived. Therefore man's being and the being of man's world demand the service of the enlightened mind.

Indeed, one of the woes of religion in all time is its refusal of the service of the enlightened and noble intellect. All other human interests prosper as they are served by clear intellect; no sane person imagines that progress is anywhere possible in these interests except through larger knowledge and deeper insight. Our world of science and applied science is the demonstration of what the intellect can do for human advancement; the advancement of science is in many ways the advancement of man. Yet in the face of all this, men are tempted to exclude

the intellect from religion, or to reduce it to an affair of the intellect. The refusal to admit the intellect to the service of religion means the rapid degeneration of religion. Many painful examples of this degeneration exist. Where degeneration has become decided, religion has sunk to a compound of superstition and reality, a jumble of the incredible and the precious; and as a consequence it has lost its power over the educated mind. It is indeed deplorable to reflect how distrust and exclusion of the scientific intellect have reduced even the Christian religion, in many places, to the consolation of ignorance.

On the other side, it must be said that intellect is not scientific if it be not in full sympathy with its subject. In the free world of Protestantism we have intellect enough and more than enough of its kind. It is too often intellect without so much as the smell of religion in its operations; it is intellect unaware of the infinite reality of the Christian religion as it lives in the heart and conscience of Christendom, unconscious of its task as interpreter, and unfit through want of experience for insight and service. Therefore the damage that ensues to religion from the unfit intellect is about as great as that which results from the exclusion of intellect. Between religion as a mindless product and religion as the issue of an irreverent mind, there is little to choose. We are not shut in, however, to either alternative; we hear the call of the truly scientific intellect that loves facts, that lives in them, that seeks for reality in the suffering and achieving spirit, that finds it there as the miner discovers the gold in the rock, that digs it and brings it forth, passes it through its thousand furnace-fires, and presents it at last to the world that cares for reality beyond everything else, in utter purity and splendor.

In dividing the world of faith into the essential and unessential there is always involved some sacrifice of sentiment, some danger of melting the rich detail of religion into the abstract and remote, some liability of substituting for the glowing compound of experience "an unearthly ballet of bloodless categories." While the division is valid and must be made, I do not forget that things eternal come through things temporal, that great religion naturally expresses itself in the sensuous richness and color of great poetry; nor do I undervalue the immense gain for

human feeling when the Eternal is transfigured in the pathos and beauty of our human world. I recall that I once saw Mont Blanc at sunset from Morges on the Lake of Geneva. Across the lake the vision passed, and up the ravine beyond to the base of the great mountain, and from the base to the summit. There it stood in the glow of evening, transfigured for a few great moments, in the farewell fires of day. Soon the shadow of flame passed; it passed with regret to those who saw it come, who beheld it fade, and who loved its beauty; but when it was gone the main object of interest remained, the mountain, solitary, sublime, everlasting. So in our faith the imperishable burns in the fires of the perishable. The abiding substance of faith is thus transfigured in the pathos of time. The shadow of God becomes inexpressibly dear to men; still the shadow of God is only shadow, and when it vanishes, God himself remains the Eternal wonder and joy.